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MONTREAL PLEASE PASS TO U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO ICAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY OPPOSES ICAO PLANS TO TRANSFER SAR  
RESPONSIBILITIES TO CYPRIOTS

This is an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

11. (SBU) Summary: Turkish MFA Civil Aviation officials summoned PMA Counselor on February 12 to request U.S. support at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Turkey has written an objection letter to ICAO leadership opposing its plans to transfer "state" responsibility for Search and Rescue (SAR) services around Cyprus from the UK to the Cypriot Government. Turkey argues that doing so will provide undue legitimacy to the "Greek Cypriot" government at a time when the divided island faces the prospect of renewed negotiations to achieve a political settlement. ICAO counters, however, that this proposed change has no effect on the current state responsibility, which they argue has always been borne by the Cypriot government, and involves no more than a change of name of the rescue coordination center. Post requests guidance from the Department on how to respond to the MFA's request for support. End summary.

12. (SBU) On February 12, PMA Counselor was summoned to the MFA Civil Aviation Department where he was briefed on an impending decision by ICAO to transfer "state" responsibility for Search and Rescue (SAR) services around Cyprus from the UK's Episkopi Rescue Coordination Center to the Cypriotm government (Larnaca RCC). MFA DDG Basat Ozturk argued that doing so would provide undue legitimacy to the "Greek Cypriot" government at a time when the divided island faces the prospect of renewed negotiations to achieve a political settlement. He added that this has heretofore been a UK government responsibility and the GOT sees this as more than a name change. In a letter from ICAO Council President Roberto Gonzalez to Turkey's ICAO Representative, Vakur Gokdenizler, Gonzalez argues that this proposal has no effect on the current state responsibility for SAR in the Cypriot region, which he says has always been held by the Cypriot government, and that it involves no more than a change of name of the rescue coordination center.

13. (SBU) Ozturk told us that Turkey has written an objection letter to ICAO regarding this issue and Gokdenizler will meet to discuss it on February 15 with ICAO leadership. The MFA also met with a UK embassy representative on February 12 to formally voice Turkish opposition to this transfer of responsibility. Our UK embassy contact told us that she too has requested guidance from London about the UK's position on this issue.

14. (SBU) Ozturk requested U.S. support for Turkey,s position at ICAO. Turkey's argument depends on its assertion that such transfers of responsibility involving Cyprus cannot be

legitimate until a political solution is achieved on the island,s status. The Greek Cypriot government is not bona fide and thus does not represent the full citizenry of Cyprus, they argue. Ozturk said that Turkey will refuse to recognize any ICAO decision that transfers SAR responsibilities under such circumstances.

15. (SBU) Action Request: Post requests guidance from the Department on how to respond to Turkey's request for assistance and support.

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<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

WILSON